

Delocutive Expressions in the Hebrew Liturgy

JOSÉ FAUR

Jewish Theological Seminary

In a very precise and penetrating article, "Bénédiction et Prière," *Revue Biblique*, 69 (1962),¹ Professor Elias Bickerman pointed out that "The Hebrews alone bless God."² In antiquity the notion of man blessing God was alien to other people. The Latin formula *macte esto*, for instance, is sacrificial,³ from which the expression *mactare victimam* "to offer a victim in sacrifice," was coined.⁴ The Latin *benedicere* (a single term from: *bene dicere*) is a lexical Hebraism chosen to render the Hebrew *brkh*.⁵ Since a blessing could be effected only by a superior to an inferior, no one, then, could bless God. "Was Israel more fetishistic than, for instance, the Babylonians?" asked Professor Bickerman. "Didn't the Jews know that 'it is the inferior who is blessed by the superior' (Heb. 7:7)?"⁶ This problem, sensed already by the Septuagint and discussed by the Church Fathers, did not present itself to the Rabbis "who thought in Hebrew."⁷ In accordance with Geonic tradition,⁸ Hebrew lexicographers explained the *bērākhâ* "benediction, blessing" that man addresses to God as "praise and thanks."⁹ Solomon ibn Farḥon (12th century) added that it includes a melody and defined it as "praise, singing, and music."¹⁰ David Qimḥi (1160–1235) classified *bārûkh* "blessed" as an adjective.¹¹ Others, among them Joseph Albo (15th century), considered it a passive

1 Reprinted with a Complementary Note in Elias Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 2:313–23.

2 *Ibid.*, 314–15.

3 *Ibid.*, note 7.

4 Émile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, trans. Elizabeth Palmer (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1973), 483.

5 See Émile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1971), 244–45; Peters Walters, *The Text of the Septuagint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 143; and Bickerman's Complementary Note, in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* 2:322–23.

6 *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* 2:316.

7 *Ibid.*, 316.

8 *Teshubhot ha-Ge'onim*, ed. R. Jacob Musafia (Lyck, 5624/1864), no. 116, 35b.

9 See Jonah ibn Janah, *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, ed. Wilhelm Bacher (Berlin, 1896), p. 79; David Qimḥi, *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, eds. J. H. R. Biesenthal and F. Lebrecht (Berlin, 1847), col. 98.

10 *Mahberet he-Arukh*, ed. Solomon Gottlieb Stern (Pressburg, 1844), 10d. On the close association of blessing and singing, see the Apocryphal work "The Prayer of Azariah," verses 33 and 66.

11 *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, col. 97. Cf. David Abudarham, *Abudarham* (Venice 5306/1546), 8d; and Solomon Finzi, *Mafteah ha-Gemara*, printed at the end of *Tummat Yesharim* (Venice, 5392/1622), 93c.

participle, and gave an elaborate explanation of how it applies differently to God and His creatures:

The word *baruk*, blessed, is a homonymous term. It is applied to one who receives benefits and favors from another, as in the expressions, “Thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed” (Num. 22:12); “Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field” (Deut. 28:3); and in many other cases. It is also applied to one who bestows favors and benefits upon another, as in the expressions, “Blessed be the Lord my Rock, who traineth my hands for war” (Ps. 144:1); “Blessed be the Lord, For He hath shown me His wondrous lovingkindness in an entrenched city” (Ps. 31:22); “Blessed art Thou, O Lord; Teach me Thy statutes” (Ps. 119:12); “Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you” (Exod. 18:10).

Blessing is a term applied to addition and increase of benefit and favor. Hence when the word *baruk* is applied to the recipient, it is a passive participle. We find the infinitive absolute of the Kal of the root *barak* in the expression, “Therefore he even blessed (*barok*) you” (Josh. 24:10). Hence the other forms of the Kal are based upon it, and *baruk* is a passive participle, meaning receiving abundance of benefits. When the word is applied to the giver, it is an adjective, like merciful and gracious, which are adjectives applied to God, indicating that the act which emanates from Him is a blessing, i.e., an increase of influence and of goodness. Just as curse means lack of goodness, as all commentators agree, so blessing means an increase of goodness. The word *baruk*, therefore, is an attribute descriptive of the one who bestows an abundance of goodness.¹²

Yet, in Christian lands where Jews no longer thought in Hebrew (or a cognate language like Arabic), the precise sense in which a man could “bless” his Maker became more and more difficult to apprehend. R. Solomon ibn Adret (ca. 1235–1310), one of the most influential Rabbis from Christian Spain, rejected the idea that blessing to God is merely praise. Emphatically, he declared: “Do not think that blessing means praise!”¹³ In the linguistic environment permeating European Jewry at the time, such as that in Northern Spain, where the grip of Romance languages exercised a particularly strong influence on the mind of the Jews, many scholars were uncomfortable with the idea that man could somehow bless his Maker.¹⁴ Eventually, the original sense of the Hebrew blessing was displaced and explained on the basis of mystical doctrines. R. Solomon ibn Adret offered a clever explanation: It is in God’s nature to bestow His own goodness to others. When man behaves in such a manner as to permit God to bestow His goodness to him and to the rest of creation, man is then “blessing” his Maker.¹⁵

12 *Sefer ha-‘Iqqarim*, ed. and trans. Issac Husik (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946), 2:157–58, II:26.

13 In his note edited in *‘En Ya‘aqob* on TB *Berakhot* 7a.

14 See R. Solomon ibn Adret, *She‘elot u-Teshubot* [vol. 1] (Bologna, 5285/1525), no. 423, 86d, where he discussed approvingly a trinitarian explanation of *bārūkh*. Then he remarked that “there is a much more deeper meaning” about blessing God, and before offering his own explanation he pointed out that “this is only according to the literal sense of the subject.”

15 *She‘elot u-Teshubot*, vol. 5, ed. R. Ḥayyim Palaggi (Leghorn: 5580/1820), no. 51, 10a–b. He further alluded to this explanation in his Commentary on *Berakhot*, cited above, note 13. It was accepted by many prominent Rabbis; see R. Aaron ha-Levi, *Sefer ha-Hinnukh*, ed. C. B. Chavel (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1966), p. 545, no. 428; R. Baḥyye, *Bi‘ur ‘al ha-Tora*, ed. C. B. Chavel (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1977), 3:299–300; and the editor’s comments on *‘En Ya‘aqob*, TB *Berakhot* 7a. This doctrine was further developed under the influence of Lurianic mysticism; see, for instance, R. Moses di Trani, *Beit ‘Elohim* (Venice, 5336/1576), 23a; R. Israel Najara, *Keli Maḥazit Berakha* (Venice, 5378/1618), chap. 1.

It will be seen that together with *berakha*, the original sense of *šebah* “praise” or Hebrew doxology was also displaced. In this study, dedicated to the memory of Professor Bickerman, we will examine the sense of these as well as of other similar liturgical expressions.

Delocutive verbs were first recognized as a distinct class by Émile Benveniste (1902–1976).¹⁶ A delocutive verb is a verb deriving from a locution, such as greetings and religious or legal formulae, effected under the pressure of lexical necessities and related to social life. An example of an English delocutive is the verb “to welcome,” which derives from the locution “welcome!” and means “to say: welcome!”, or “to hail” which means “to say: hail!” The delocutive verb is different from a denominative. The base term of a denominative is a noun or designation and stands in relation with “to do . . .” denoting, therefore, action. The base of a delocutive is a call or formulaic expression and has the particular connotation of “to say . . .” denoting, therefore, activities of discourse.

The essential and signal feature of a delocutive is that it is in the relationship of “to say . . .” with its nominal base, and not in the relationship of “to do . . .” which belongs to the denominative. It is not the least instructive characteristic of this class to show us a sign of language deriving from a locution of discourse and not from another sign of language; by this very fact, delocutives are, above all, from the moment at which they are created, verbs denoting activities of discourse. Their structures as well as the reasons that summon them into existence assign them a very particular position among the other classes of verbal derivatives.¹⁷

The base of a delocutive, however, cannot be an interjection construed as a simple onomatopoeia, such as the English “to hush” or “to boo.”¹⁸ The same is with the biblical verb *wayyahas* (Num. 13:30) which derives from the interjection *has* “silence!”¹⁹ Since *has* is construed as an onomatopoeia,²⁰ it cannot serve as the base of a delocutive.

Delocutive verbs are common in Semitic languages, e.g., the Ethiopic *amsala* “he declared: similar!” from the locution *masal* “this is similar to . . .”; the Arabic *ḥamdalla* “he praised Alla,” from the locution *al-ḥamdu li-ʿAlla* “praise belongs to Alla!”, and *sallam* “he greeted,” from *as-salamu ʿalaikum* “peace be upon you!” Delocutive verbs are also found in biblical Hebrew.²¹ A good example is the verb *wattahinû* (Deut. 1:41). As noted by R. Abraham ibn ʿEzra (1089–1164) this verb derives from the locution *hēn* “yes!” and means “you have said: yes!”²² Interestingly, the Latin verb *negare* means “to say: *ne!*”²³

16 *Problems in General Linguistics*, 239–46.

17 *Ibid.*, 245–46.

18 *Ibid.*, 245.

19 See Ibn Janah, *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, p. 122, and R. Abraham ibn ʿEzra in his Commentary to the Pentateuch, ad loc.

20 Until recent times Arabic speaking Jews from Damascus and Aleppo used the interjection “*has!*” (cf. Judg. 3:19) or “*hassu!*” (cf. Neh. 8:11) to demand silence at the synagogue, at the same time raising their index finger to their lips.

21 Delbert R. Hillers, “Delocutive Verbs in Biblical Hebrew,” *JBL* 86 (1967), 320–24.

22 In his Commentary to the Pentateuch, ad loc.

23 See *Problems in General Linguistics*, 241.

“The creation of delocutive verbs,” remarked Benveniste, “is effected under the pressure of lexical necessities and it is connected with the frequency and importance of pregnant formulae in certain types of culture.”²⁴ The Hebrew liturgy is rich in delocutive verbs. An important factor contributing to the frequency of this type of verb is antiphony. Antiphony played an important role in Jewish music.²⁵ There was also antiphonal psalmody and singing.²⁶ In the first century of the common era, Philo described the singing performance of the Therapeutae (a Jewish sect flourishing in Egypt at the time) as follows:

They rise up all together and standing in the middle of the refectory form themselves first into two choirs, one of men and one of women, the leader and precentor chosen for each being the most honored amongst them and also the most musical. Then they sing hymns to God composed of many measures and set to many melodies, sometimes chanting together, sometimes taking up the harmony antiphonally, hands and feet keeping time in accompaniment, and rapt with enthusiasm reproduce sometimes the lyrics of the procession, sometimes of the halt and of the wheeling and counter-wheeling of a choric dance.²⁷

Delocutive verbs played a key role in the performance of a special type of antiphonal singing. In this type of antiphony the public or choir responded to the invitation of the precentor by singing a song or formula that either contained or began with the same base term that the precentor had used to summon them to sing. The precentor summoned the public with a delocutive verb. One such verb is *rômēmû* (Ps. 99:5; cf. *wa’ārômēmenhû* [Exod. 15:7]), *unērômēmâ* (Ps. 34:4), etc. Usually it is translated “to exalt” God. As a delocutive, however, it means “to proclaim: [God is] High!” and refers to formulae such as those found in Ps. 113:4, Isa. 57:15, etc.²⁸ It is possible that, in some instances at least, the delocutive call indicated a specific melodic pattern, much like the Arabic *maqam* still used by Jews in the Near East.²⁹ Probably,

24 Loc. cit.

25 See Curt Sachs, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1943), 92–95; Alfred Søndrey, *Music in Ancient Israel* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1969), 166–69.

26 See Hanoch Avenary, “Form Structure of Psalms and Canticles in Early Jewish and Christian Chant,” *Musica Disciplina* 7 (1963), 1–13; reprinted in his *Encounters of East and West in Music* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1979), 105–17. It should be noted that the Hebrew *‘ānā* “responded” is associated with “singing,” indicating, thereby, antiphony; see *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World*, 92–93; *Music in Ancient Israel*, 127, 523. This point has been noted in *Maḥberet he-‘Arukh*, 49–50; R. Abraham ibn ‘Ezra, in his shorter Commentary to Exodus, *Bi’ur ‘al Sefer Shemot* (Prague, 1840), p. 100; R. David Qimḥi, *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, cols. 542–43, etc.; see the commentaries of Ibn ‘Ezra and Qimḥi on Ps. 147:7. A similar verb in Arabic, *ḡanna* means “sing.” (On the interchangeability of the Hebrew *‘Ayin* with the Arabic *Ġayin*, see *Teshubot ha-Ge’onim*, ed. A. Harkavy [Berlin, 1887], 108.) The Rabbis were quite aware of the close association of “response/singing.” In a *Midrash*, quoted by R. Yom Ṭob ash-Shibili, *Ḥidduše ha-Riṭba*, on TB *Makkot* 18b, the Rabbis commenting on the verb *wē‘ānītā* “you will respond” (Deut. 26:5), explained: “with a melody” (*bēniggūn*). Finally it may be significant to notice that in Arabic *ḡanna*, *ḡann*, *ḡunna*, etc., mean “to speak through the nose,” “to nasalize,” “nasal pronunciation.”

27 *The Contemplative Life*, XI, 83–87, in *Philo* (Loeb Classical Library), 9:165–67. For dancing and singing as devotional expressions, see 3 Mac. 6:32 and 35. For antiphony in Talmudic times, see TB *Ber.* 31a. As in Philo’s time, men and women sang antiphonally; cf. TB *Soṭa* 48a.

28 Significantly, this verse is included in the Ashkenazic version of *Nišmat*.

29 See A. Z. Idelsohn, “Die Makamen in der hebräischen Poese der orientalischen Jüden,” *MGWJ* 57 (1913), 314–25. For early Medieval Jewish interest on *maqam*, see Hanoch Avenary, “Paradigms of Arabic

like the *pētiḥâ* used among these Jews, the call of the precentor served to set the melodic mood. This is most likely with those terms that are usually associated with musical instruments. There are two such terms in the Scriptures. One is the verb *halēlû* (Ps. 113:1) “give praise to . . .” actually meaning “to say: *halēlûyāh!*” (Ps. 104:35), “*mēhūllāl!*” (Ps. 18:4), or a similar formula containing the base *hll*. Since this type of hymn was associated with musical instruments (Ps. 150:3–5), one may assume that it also represented a melodic mood. The other term, *hōdû* (Ps. 33:2) “give praise or thanks to . . .” means “to say a formula containing the term ^o*ode(h)*” (Ps. 7:18; cf. Gen. 29:35) ‘I shall praise’” and ^o*odekhâ*, (Ps. 18:50) “I shall thank or praise Thee,” in the singular; or *hōdīnû* (Ps. 75:2), and *mōdīm* (1 Chr. 29:13) in the plural.³⁰ The “Thanksgiving Scroll” from the Dead Sea contains an extensive collection of hymns beginning with ^o*ode(h)*.³¹ The nominal form *tōdâ* “thanks” (Jon. 2:10; Ps. 26:7) is connected with “the sound” of music (Isa. 51:3; Jer. 30:19) and “the voice of singing” (Ps. 42:5); it also was accompanied by musical instruments (Ps. 43:4; 71:22; cf. 147:7). In the later books of the Scriptures the bases *hll* and *ydh* are closely associated (see Ezra 3:11; Neh. 12:24; 1 Chr. 16:4; 25:3; 29:13; 2 Chr. 5:13, 31, etc.).³²

Occasionally, Scripture and the Jewish Prayer Book complement each other: one preserving the delocutive verb and the other preserving the liturgical formula. Consider the verb *mēyahādīm* “they declare [Him]: One!” found in the *Yōṣēr*. This verb does not appear in Scripture. However, the formula to which this verb is referring is the *Shema*^c found in Deut. 6:1. A similar example is the verb *lēhamlīkh* used in the *Qēdūšâ* of the *Yōṣēr* and the ^c*Amidâ*. In Scripture it is used as a denominative and means “to enthrone.” In the *Qēdūšâ* of the *Yōṣēr*, *lēhamlīkh* is used as a delocutive and means “to declare [Him]: King!” The formula is found in Exod. 15:18 (cf. Ps. 146:10). It is worth noting that at the end of the blessing following the *Shema*^c (both in the morning and evening), it is recited “and they proclaimed [Him] King and they said: ‘God will be king for ever and ever!’” The Prayer Book has also preserved a formula not found in the Scriptures. Before the hymn *Bārūkh shē’amar* it is said: “God is King, God was King, God will be King for ever and ever!” Occasionally, Scripture contains only the delocutive verb, whereas the formula is found only in the Prayer Book. Such is the case with *šabbēḥūhū* (Ps. 115:1) “give praise to Him!” Since it is delocutive, it means “say:

Musical Modes in the Genizah Fragment Cambridge, T.S. 90, 4,” *Yuval* 4 (1982), 11–28. Similar types of “melodic patterns” were current in Ancient Mesopotamia; see A. D. Kilmer, “The Discovery of an Ancient Mesopotamian Theory of Music,” *PAPS* 115 (1971), 131–49. Most probably (some of) the titles of the Psalms served to indicate the melodic pattern; see Curt Sachs, *The History of Musical Instruments* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1940), 126–27. For a recent discussion of this subject, see Bathja Bayer, “The Titles of the Psalms,” *Yuval* 4 (1982), 29–123.

30 In the ^c*Amidâ*, *Mōdīm* is recited right before the blessing “. . . and to you is proper to give thanks” (*lēhōdōt*).

31 See Jacob Licht, *The Thanksgiving Scroll* (Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute, 1957) [Hebrew]. The “praise” or “thanks” of the base *ydh* conveys the submission of a subject to the sovereign. See Se’adya’s translation of *yōdūkhā* (Gen. 49:8) in *Version Arabe du Pentateuque*, ed. J. Derenbourg (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1893), 77. Hence the statement made at the end of the second paragraph of *Nišmat*, “And only to you (God), we say thanks,” i.e., God alone is recognized as sovereign.

32 The bases *hll* and *ydh* are the two themes of the *Hallel*. The first part of the *Hallel* opens and concludes with *halēlūyāh!* The second part, too, opens and concludes with *hōdū!* Probably, as with *maqam Rast* and *Nahwand* it was easy to pass from one musical mood to the other.

God is *měšūbbaḥ!* (“praiseworthy!”) or a similar expression. No such formula is found in the Scriptures. The Prayer Book, however, has preserved two liturgical hymns: *‘Alēnū lěšabbēaḥ* and *Yištabbah Šimkha*.

In order to grasp the precise sense of many liturgical expressions it is necessary to consider the double status peculiar to terms used both as denominatives and delocutives. Let us examine the Latin verb *salutare*. As a delocutive (“to greet”) it derives from the formula *salus* and means “to say: Greetings!” As a denominative (“to save”) it derives from the noun *salus* and means “to effect the well-being or salvation of someone.” Hence the expression *salutem dare* may mean “to give greetings” or “to give salvation” depending on whether it is interpreted as delocutive or denominative.³³

The same double status is found in some Hebrew verbs. To properly determine the specific status of such verbs is essential when considering those liturgical expressions that as denominatives are offensive to basic religious feelings. We will examine three such verbs.

As a denominative, *lēhaqdīš* means “to sanctify” and refers to the performance of a ritual whereby something is “sanctified” (cf. the *pi^cel* usage in Exod. 40:10; 1 Kgs. 8:64; Job 1:5; etc.), becoming, thereby, “holy.” As a delocutive, it would be insulting to apply such a verb to God (e.g., Isa. 8:13; 29:23; etc.) since it implies that God’s holiness is the effect of a ritual performed on Him by the worshiper. As a delocutive, it simply means the utterance of a formula declaring that something is *qādōš* (“holy”). One such formula is found in Isa. 6:3 and serves as the basis for the *Qēdūšā* recited in the *Yōšēr* and *Hāzārā*; respectively, this formula is introduced by the verb *lēhaqdīš* and *naqdīšākh* (in the Ashkenazic Prayer Book: *nēqaddēsh*). These verbs do not derive from the adjective *qādōš* “holy,” but from the formula *qādōš*. They mean “to proclaim: [God is] Holy!”—not “to sanctify [God].” The same applies to other passages usually taken to mean the “sanctification of God,” as when God says: “*wēniqdaštī* among the children of Israel” (Lev. 22:32). It means that He “will be declared Holy!”—rather than to be “sanctified.” The same is true of *lēhaqdīš lō* (2 Chr. 2:3; cf. 30:17); *wēhiqdīšūhū* (Isa. 29:33); etc.; these are simply delocutive and refer to declaratory formulae proclaiming God’s holiness.³⁴

The second verb is *lēhagdīl*. The double status is particularly evident in the imperfect form *yigdal*. When it is used as a denominative it derives from the adjective *gādōl* “great” and means “to grow, to develop” (see Gen. 38:11; 48:19). As a delocutive it derives from the locution *gādōl* “great!” and means “to declare: [God is] Great!” (see Ps. 35:27; 40:17; 70:5; cf. Num. 14:17 and Mal. 1:5). Many such formulae were

33 *Problems in General Linguistics*, 239.

34 In Rabbinic Literature the verb *lēqaddēš* is used delocutively, e.g., “to sanctify” the New Moon, a reference to the formula *mēqūddāš*; see *M. Rosh ha-Shana* 2:7; or “to sanctify” a woman, a reference to the matrimonial formula *harē ‘at mēqūddešet li*. The imperative *qaddēš* recited in the poem before the Passover *Haggada*, is a delocutive referring to the *qidūš*. In this connection it is interesting to note that among Arabic speaking Jews the verb *hammaš* means ‘he recited (the blessing) *hammōšī*’; and *qaddaš* means ‘he recited the *qidūš*.’ Similarly, the forms *hiqdīš*, *hūqdaš* designating the consecration of something to the Temple, are delocutives referring to the utterance of a formula declaring the object *qādōš* “holy!”

preserved, such as in Ps. 48:2. Accordingly, the expressions *gaddēlū* (Ps. 34:4), *waʿāgaddēlennū* (Ps. 69:31) and *hābū gōdel* (Deut. 32:3) do not mean “to magnify God,” but “to declare: [God is] Great!”³⁵ Likewise, it would be incorrect to translate *wēhitgaddilī wēhitqaddīšī* (Ezek. 38:23) that God will “magnify and sanctify” Himself; it rather means that the nations will declare that God is “Great!” and “Holy!”³⁶ Consistent with the Targumic interpretation (*Neophyti* 1) that *hābū gōdel* “give greatness” (Deut. 32:3) stands for “expressing glory, praise and exaltation” to God,³⁷ the Rabbis interpreted it as a general summons to praise the Lord. Therefore, it was associated with the various calls given by the precentor to the audience to participate in the different liturgical services. It was also interpreted as a strict delocutive and was associated with the formula *yēhē šēmō haggādōl mēbōrākh* used in the version of the *Qaddīš* in vogue in the Holy Land.³⁸ (Our current *šēmē rabbā mēbārakh* is the Aramaic translation of *šēmō haggādōl mēbōrākh*). The opening line of the *Qaddīš*, *Yitgaddal wēyitqaddaš šēmē rabbā* [= *šēmō haggādōl*] is an invitation to proclaim that God is “Great!” and “Holy!” It should be translated, “Let us proclaim that His great name is ‘Great!’ and ‘Holy!’”—rather than “Let us magnify and hallow His great name.”³⁹

The double status peculiar to delocutive verbs is essential in order to understand the different nuances of *lēbārēkh* “to bless.” As a denominative it derives from *bērākhā* “blessing, benefit, gift,” and means “to communicate a beneficial power to something (e.g., Exod. 23:25) or someone” (e.g., Gen. 27:30). As a delocutive it derives from the formula *bārūkh* and means “to say or proclaim: *bārūkh!*” To illustrate, Melchizedek “blessed him (*waybārēkhēhū*) and said: *Bārūkh* is Abraham (Gen. 14:19). David also “blessed (*waybārēkh*) the Lord . . . and said: *Bārūkh* You Lord, God of our father Israel!” (1 Chr. 29:10). The precentor at the Temple summoned the people with the call: “*Bārēkhū* the Lord!” to which they responded: “*Bārūkh* the Lord from Zion!” (Ps. 135:19–21). Similarly, the precentor at the Synagogue summons the congregants with the call “*Bārēkhū* the Lord . . .” to which they respond: “*Bārūkh* the Lord . . . !”

35 The Arabic verb *kabbar*—like so many other liturgical terms—is a lexical Hebraism, meaning “to exclaim: *allahu akbar!*” (“God is Great!”). In his translation to the Pentateuch, Seʿadya Gaʿon translates *gōdel* (Deut. 32:3) *kibriya* “majesty, glory”—in the Arabic sense of *takbir* “the exclamation: *allahu akbar!*” See *Version Arabe du Pentateuque*, 301. Probably this is the sense of the Targum Anqelos, ad loc. *rēbūtā* “the exclamation: *yēhēh šēmēh rabbā mēbārakh!*” Cf. the *Targum* on Ezek. 38:23. See below, note 39.

36 See LXX ad loc.

37 *Neophyti* 1, ed. Alejandro Díez Macho (Madrid: Barcelona Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1978), 5:267. This is the sense of the LXX, ad loc.

38 *Sifre*, 306, ed. L. Finkelstein (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1969), 342.

39 The association of the verb *lēhagdīl* with the *Qaddīš* is implicit in the liturgical poem *ʿAgaddelkhā* (“I shall proclaim you: Great!”), to be recited before saying the *Qaddīš*, written by R. Abraham ibn ʿEzra, *The Religious Poems of Abraham Ibn Ezra*, ed. Israel Levin (Jerusalem: Publications of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1975), 1:34–35 [Hebrew]. It should be noted that the verb *hābū* “give,” here, is associated with “singing.” See Seʿadya Gaʿon’s note on this term in his Commentary to *Tehillim*, ed. and trans. Joseph Qafih (Jerusalem, 5726/1966), 98 [Hebrew]; cf. R. David Qimhi’s Commentary on Ps. 29:7. A synonym, the root *nin* “to give,” is occasionally used for “to emit a sound”; see Exod. 9:23; Num. 14:1; Ps. 104:12; 2 Chr. 24:9, etc. Similarly, in Rabbinic Literature “to give” stands for “to say” in expressions such as *nōtēn šālōm* “to greet” (M. *Berakhot* 2:1). Likewise, in the liturgy we find in *Yōšēr*, *yittēnū*, and in the *Yōšēr* of the Sabbath *nōtēnim* (2), *yittēnū*; and *wenātēnū* in the first blessing after the morning *Šema*, in the sense of “singing.”

With the same call the Psalmist had summoned the celestial beings and the rest of creation (Ps. 103:20–22).⁴⁰

This theme is further developed in the Prayer Book. On the Sabbath and holidays, before saying *Bārēkhû*, there is recited the hymn beginning: *Nišmat kol ḥay tēbārēkh ʿet šimkhā* “Every living soul shall bless”—in the sense of declaring *Barukh!*—“your Name.” In the Priestly Blessing (Num. 6:23–27) this verb appears once as a delocutive and another time as a denominative. On the one hand, the obligation of the priest “thus you shall bless” (*kô tēbārēkhû*) the children of Israel is not to actually communicate some beneficial power to the people. It is merely a delocutive; “Thus you shall bless” simply means “to pronounce the formula beginning with *yēbārekhkhā* [God] will bless you” (Num. 6:22–23). On the other hand, the blessing that the priest invokes from God is the actual communication of a beneficial power to the people. In order to distinguish between these two senses of “blessing” the Rabbis taught:

And I shall bless them. Lest Israel should say: “Our blessings depend on the priests!”—the verse teaches: *And I shall bless them.* Lest the priest should say: “Are we [worthy] to bless Israel?”—the verse teaches: *And I shall bless them;* I [alone] could bless my people Israel. As it is said: “For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the doings of your hands” (Deut. 2:7) . . . And it says: “You shall be [more] blessed (*bārūkh*) than all other nations” (Deut. 7:14) . . .⁴¹

Before proceeding to further explore the sense of *bērākhâ*, we must examine a new class of nouns found in the Hebrew liturgy. These are delocutive nouns. Like the same class of verbs, the base of delocutive noun is a locution. It stands in relation to a formulaic expression—unlike the regular noun, which stands in relation to a thing or concept. Again, like the delocutive verb, this type of noun is frequent in the liturgy. It denotes speech activities and is effected under the pressure of lexical necessities. A base evolving into a delocutive verb will not always result in a delocutive noun, and vice versa. Sometimes, however, the same base will develop into a delocutive verb and noun.⁴²

A good example of a delocutive noun is *gēʿullâ*. Regularly, it means “salvation, redemption,” and refers to the activities of the *gôʿel* “savior” discharging his responsibilities as such. It is also a liturgical term designating those poems that are chanted in conjunction with the first blessing after the *Shema*^c. The theme of the blessing is God’s redemption of Israel, ending with the exclamation: *gāʿal yisrāʿel!* (“[God] has saved Israel!”).⁴³ Since these poems developed the theme of God’s salvation of Israel, they are designated *gēʿullâ* (pl. *gēʿullôt*).⁴⁴ Here, the noun *gēʿullâ* is not related to the verb *gāʿal*,

40 This theme was beautifully elaborated by Judah ha-Levi, in a poem to be recited in the Day of Atonement, *ʿĒlōhīm ʿel mī ʿAmšilekhā*; see *The Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Yehuda Halevi*, ed. Dov Jarden (Jerusalem, 1978), 1:103–11, no. 36.

41 *Sifre Bamidbar*, ed. H. S. Horowitz (Jerusalem: Wahrman Books, 1966), p. 49, #43.

42 E.g., from *hill*, *lēhallēl* “to say: *haleluyah!*” and *hallēl* the noun designating the recitation of the *haleluyah* hymn; from *ydh*, *lēhōdôt* “to say: *tōdâ!*” etc., and the noun *hōdāʿôt* designating the *tōdâ* hymn.

43 In contradistinction with the fourth benediction of the middle section of the *ʿĀmidâ*, which is a supplication and addresses God as the *gôʿel* “savior” of Israel; cf. TB *Pesaḥim* 117b.

44 In Rabbinic Literature this term designates the first benediction after the *Shema*^c; see TB *Berakhot* 4b, 9b.

but to the formulaic exclamation $g\bar{a}^{\circ}al\ yisr\bar{a}^{\circ}el$.⁴⁵ The same is the case with $q\bar{e}d\bar{u}^{\circ}s\bar{a}$. This noun appears only in Rabbinic literature, and refers to “holiness” in general. As a liturgical term $q\bar{e}d\bar{u}^{\circ}s\bar{a}$ is a delocutive noun designating those poems and hymns whose theme is the formula “ $q\bar{a}d\bar{o}^{\circ}š! q\bar{a}d\bar{o}^{\circ}š! q\bar{a}d\bar{o}^{\circ}š!$ ” (Isa. 6:3). There are two other delocutive nouns related to the base $qd\bar{s}$. One is $qaddi\bar{s}$, from the locution $yitqadda\bar{s}!$ The other is $qidd\bar{u}^{\circ}š$ from the locution $m\bar{e}qadd\bar{e}^{\circ}š!$ which is central to the blessing pronounced at the end of this prayer.

The doxology $Yi\bar{s}tabbah\ \bar{S}imkh\bar{a}$ (“Let your name be praised!”) contains a good number of delocutive nouns; $hall\bar{e}l$, $tif^{\circ}eret$, $g\bar{e}d\bar{u}^{\circ}l\bar{a}$, $malkh\bar{u}^{\circ}t$ are delocutives referring to such exclamations as $m\bar{e}h\bar{u}^{\circ}ll\bar{a}!$ $m\bar{e}f\bar{o}^{\circ}ar!$ $g\bar{a}d\bar{o}^{\circ}l!$ $m\bar{e}l\bar{e}kh!$, etc. These nouns are inserted between two phrases. The introductory phrase, $K\bar{i}\ l\bar{e}kh\bar{a}\ n\bar{a}^{\circ}e(h)$, means “For to you it is fitting [to declare].” The closing phrase opens with the preposition $L\bar{e}$ - “to.” It serves to indicate the relation between the delocutive nouns and God’s name—the substantive of the concluding phrase. $L\bar{e}\bar{s}imkh\bar{a}\ hagg\bar{a}d\bar{o}^{\circ}l\ w\bar{e}haqq\bar{a}d\bar{o}^{\circ}š$ means that all these honorific titles are truly applicable “to your great and holy name” alone. The same type of doxology is found in the verse “To you, O God! [may be properly declared:] Greatness! Might! Glory! Victory! and Majesty!” (1 Chr. 29:11). As delocutives these nouns do not refer to any specific qualities in the Deity, but to locutions that are fitting to Him alone.

Generally, $b\bar{e}r\bar{a}kh\bar{a}$ designates an act whereby some beneficial power is transmitted to someone or something (e.g., Deut. 11:27, 29; 28:8; 30:1, 19). Professor Bickerman had noted that “in Hebrew the action of blessing (or cursing, cf. 2 Sam. 16:7), is not linked to the usage of the verb *barak*.”⁴⁶ $B\bar{e}r\bar{a}kh\bar{a}$ means also “praise, exaltation.” The Rabbis coincide with the Septuagint in explaining “The memory of the righteous *libr\bar{a}kh\bar{a}*” (Prov. 10:7) to mean: $l\bar{e}š\bar{e}bah\bar{e}$ (*Mishna Yoma*, 3:11–12). It is frequently used as an expression of “thanks.” Josephus tells how the people went to a rally to celebrate a victory “and blessed the power of God and His assistance,” from which circumstance the place received the name of the “Valley of Blessing” [$\bar{E}meq\ B\bar{e}r\bar{a}kh\bar{a}$, 2 Chr. 20:26].⁴⁷ “To bless,” means also “to greet, to salute” (2 Kgs. 4:29). For instance, when the patriarch Jacob appeared before Pharaoh, Scripture says that he “blessed (*wayb\bar{a}r\bar{e}kh*) Pharaoh” (Gen. 47:7). Se^cadya Ga^con (881–942), one of the most respected authorities in the Middle Ages, rendered it “greeted.”⁴⁸ Probably, the association of $b\bar{e}r\bar{a}kh\bar{a}$ with

45 Other liturgical compositions such as $h\bar{o}š\bar{a}^{\circ}n\bar{o}t$ (hymns containing the formula: $h\bar{o}š\bar{a}^{\circ}n\bar{a}!$), $s\bar{e}l\bar{i}h\bar{o}t$ “supplications” (hymns and poems containing the formula: $s\bar{e}lah\ l\bar{a}n\bar{u}$), $y\bar{o}š\bar{e}r\bar{o}t$ (hymns and poems chanted in the first benediction before the *Shema*^c), $z\bar{u}l\bar{a}t\bar{o}t$ (poems chanted in the section containing the formula $z\bar{u}l\bar{a}tekh\bar{a}$, in the first benediction after the *Shema*^c), etc. For a brief description of these types of liturgical compositions, see A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932).

46 *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, 2:316.

47 *Jewish Antiquities*, IX, 15 (Loeb Classical Library), 6:9.

48 See *Version Arabe du Pentateuque*, 74. For verse 10, see the variant in n. 4. It was followed by David al-Fasi, *Kitab Jami^c al-Alfaz*, ed. Solomon L. Skoss (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1:276; Ibn Janaḥ, *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, 79; Qimḥi, *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, col. 99; and Rashi ad loc. Similarly, the *Targum Neophyti* rendered verse 7 as “blessed,” which in Aramaic as in Hebrew may mean “to greet.” However, there is a supplication appended to the “blessing” in verse 10, indicating, thereby, that it must be interpreted as a regular “blessing,” in contradistinction to verse 7.

greetings was determined by the formula used for salutation. To Boaz's greetings, the reapers replied: "May the Lord bless you" (Ruth 2:4). Travelers were greeted with the formula "The blessing of the Lord upon you!"—to which they replied: "We have blessed you in the name of the Lord!" (Ps. 129:8).

Bārûkh, usually interpreted as a passive participle ("blessed [by]"), is actually an adjective; in its delocutive sense it serves to designate the object upon which a *bĕrākhā* (either as 'blessing' or 'praise') was pronounced.⁴⁹ It may be used as (a) an optative, (b) a nominal complement, (c) and a vocative. Each of these functions is syntactically different. When used as an optative, *bārûkh* must be followed by the 2nd personal pronoun (see 1 Sam. 15:13, 25, 33; Ruth 3:10), as when Saul said to David: "*Bārûkh* you, my son David" (1 Sam. 26:25). It expresses hope (or anticipates a future beneficial state; cf. Deut. 28:3-6). In this case the *ṣe'amîm* or traditional prosodic marks indicate the *bārûkh* has to be read together with the personal pronoun (*Bārûkh-²attā*). When used as a nominal complement, *bārûkh* indicates an inner quality. It is a doxology frequently applied to God (Gen. 9:26; 24:27; Exod. 18:10; 1 Sam. 25:32, 39; 2 Sam. 18:28; 1 Kgs. 1:48; 5:21; 8:56; Zech. 11:5, etc.). When used as a nominal complement, *bārûkh* must be joined by the *ṣe'amîm* to the substantive "Lord" (*Bārûkh-²Ādōnā*), having the sense: "Blessed (is) the Lord." In this case the predicate of the sentence is always in the 3rd person. In the Scriptures *bārûkh* is used as a vocative only twice (Ps. 119:12; 1 Chr. 29:10). In those cases it is followed by the 2nd personal pronoun and the name of God. As indicated by the adjoining *ṣe'amîm*, *bārûkh* must be read together with the personal pronoun and the name of God: *Bārûkh-²attā-²ādōnāy*, in contradistinction to the optative, *Bārûkh-²attā, X*. It should be translated: "Blessed You the Lord!"—rather than: Blessed (are) you, O Lord." The presence of the second personal pronoun is the mark distinguishing the vocative *bārûkh* from *bārûkh* as a doxology. Similarly, in both the Ashkenazic and Sephardic traditions the *ṣe'amîm* appended to the blessings of the *Haṣṣidim* indicate that *Bārûkh* must be read together with *²Attā-²Ādōnāy*.

As Benveniste had demonstrated in a different context, the function of the personal pronoun is to transform impersonal language into subjective, personal speech.⁵⁰ In our case, the 2nd person pronoun serves to transform *bārûkh* from a predicate, functioning as a doxology, to a vocative addressed directly to God. In the Hebrew liturgy, this marks the difference between a prayer, that must be addressed directly to God in the 2nd person, and a doxology predicating praise to God. Compare "*Bārûkh* the Lord, God of Israel" (2 Chr. 2:11), or when Jethro exclaimed: "*Bārûkh* the Lord" (Exod. 18:10), with "*Bārûkh!* O you Lord, God of our father Israel" (1 Chr. 29:10). The last verse is a direct invocation, addressed by the speaker to God, establishing thus an individual discourse

49 A delocutive *bārûkh* is found in the Rabbinic expression *ṣol bārûkh* (TB *Ber.* 40a) 'take the *bārûkh*', i.e., the piece of bread upon which the blessing was pronounced. See Se'adya Gaon in *Saadiana*, ed. S. Schechter (Cambridge, 1903), 59. This interpretation is also given by Patai Gaon and Shemu'el ben Ḥofni, for which see my *R. Yisrael Moshe Ḥazzan* (Haifa, 1978), 174 [Heb.]. The same interpretation is given by Rashi ad loc. Interestingly, Arabic speaking Jews refer to the morsel upon which the blessing was pronounced as *hammôṣî*², as in "he is eating *hammôṣî*²". In Yiddish, too, *hammôṣî*² may refer to the bread that was blessed.

50 See *Problems in General Linguistics*, 217-21.

with Him. The other two verses are declarations predicated of Him, and addressed not to Him but to the public at hand. We can now grasp the principle enunciated by Rab (3rd century) concerning the formula for benedictions: "It must be said 'you' (^ʔ*attâ*)."⁵¹ This view is reflected in the standard liturgical formula which invariably includes the pronoun ^ʔ*attâ*. Accordingly, it should be translated: "*Bārûkh!* O Lord, our God." Since in the Hebrew liturgy both the prayer of supplication (^ʔ*Āmidâ*) and benedictions (*bērākhôt*) must begin with the formula "*Bārûkh*, you O Lord," both are designated *bērākhôt*.⁵² Hence, the close association of "prayers" and "blessings" in Jewish tradition.⁵³

Bērākhâ in the sense of "praise" is a delocutive noun related to the formula "*Bārûkh!*" It does not convey the act of transmitting a beneficial power, but of *uttering* a locution beginning with the vocative "*Bārûkh!*" There are, however, some structural differences between a *bērākhâ* offered for thanks and the prayer (^ʔ*Āmidâ*). A *bērākhâ* for thanks contains two parts. The first is a direct call addressed to God in the 2nd person. It consists of: (a) a vocative ("*Bārûkh!* You Lord!"), (b) and the title ("Our God, King of the Universe"). The title "King of the Universe" was applied to God in Hellenistic times. The High Priest Simon addressed God: "Lord, Lord, king of the heavens and sovereign of all creation" (3 Mac. 2:2). The formula of the benediction is already found in the Book of Enoch: "Blessed art Thou, Lord of righteousness who ruleth over the world" [= *melekh hāʔôlām*]. The variant "who ruleth for ever"⁵⁴ stems from a Hebrew text which read ^ʔ*ôlām* "eternal" rather than the standard *hāʔôlām* "the world." The second part is the specification of the occasion for praise and a prayer (see below); the specification is always in the 3rd person. In this way, it is also distinguished from the call addressed to God.⁵⁵

The purpose of the *bērākhâ* is (a) to acknowledge God as the author and source of all ("our God, King of the Universe"), (b) and of the specific occasion at hand. This was particularly significant in the polytheistic environment of the time, lest God be

51 See PT *Berakhot*, IX, 1, 11d. Since the linguistic aspect of Rab's position was not recognized, there was some difficulty in fully understanding his view. For some background literature on Rab's position, see R. Jacob Ḥajez, *Halakhot Qeṭannot* (Venice, 5404/1704), part II, #157, 40d; R. Solomon Algazi, *Zehab Šeha* (Fürth, 5452/1692), #56, 19a; R. Abraham Palaggi, *Shemo ʔAbraham* (Salonika, 5627/1867), 40b-42a; Saul Lieberman, *Tosefta Kifshuṭa, Zeraʔim* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1955), 1:60, n. 10. Contrary to the opinion of Abayye, TB *Berakhot*, 40b, there was no conflict between Rab and R. Yoḥanan; rather each was mentioning one of the two required elements of the benediction's formula. This is obvious from PT *Berakhot*, IX, 1, 11d, where reported in the name of Rab was the view reported in TB *Berakhot* 40b in the name of R. Yoḥanan. Probably, this was the intention of R. Nissim Gaʔon, *Sefer ha-Mafteah*, on TB *Berakhot* 12a, where he indicated the view of Rab as reported in the above mentioned PT. In fact, Maimonides in *Berakhot*, I, 5 totally disregarded Abayye's opinion on this matter and his subsequent decision. Cf., however, Maran Joseph Caro in *Kesef Mishne*, ad loc., and *Bet Yosef, ʔOrah Ḥayyim*, CCXIV.

52 See *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, 2:318-21.

53 PT *Berakhot*, IX, 1, 11d finds only a faint allusion in the Scripture for this title.

54 R. H. Charles, *The Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 2:203.

55 Rather than a "compromise" between two conflicting opinions, see Lieberman, *Tosefta Kifshuṭa, Zeraʔim*, 1:60, n. 10. As a matter of fact, Samuel's position mentioned in PT *Berakhot*, IX, 1, 11d that benedictions are to be said in the 3rd person, concerns only the *call* addressed to God, not the *specification* of that blessing.

recognized as the source of the specific occasion at hand to the exclusion of everything else. Hence the need to emphasize that He is “the King of the Universe.” Regarding the purpose of the *bērākḥā*, Joseph Albo wrote:

The word blessing is also applied to praise and laudation generally. Thus we read, “I will bless the Lord at all times,” where bless means the same as praise, hence the verse concludes, “His praise shall continually be in my mouth.” (Ps. 34:2)

This is the reason why the men of the Great Synagogue ordained that the expression of blessing shall be used in praising God for the manifold benefits which man receives from God, benefits of body of all kinds and benefits of soul. The benediction of grace after meals is an example of praise for physical blessings, while praise for spiritual blessings is illustrated in the blessings over the Torah, the blessings introductory to the performance of certain commandments, and other blessings besides, like those which praise God, indicating that He is the source of all blessings, and that all benefits and good fortune of every kind come from Him . . .

To prevent the thought that God is the author of good only, and that there is another power which is the author of evil, the Rabbis say that one is obliged to bless God for evil as well as for good, in order to show that everything comes from God.⁵⁶

Interestingly, we find in Christian tradition the specification for praise following an address to God. In his “Epistle to the Ephesians,” Ignatius wrote: “For blessed is He (*eulogetos*) who granted you to be worthy to obtain such a bishop.”⁵⁷ It is worthy of note, however, that God is addressed here in the 3rd person.

The Prayer (*ʿĀmīdā*) comprises three parts. The first is a call addressed to God in the 2nd person. It consists of: (a) a vocative (*Bārūkh!*), with the 2nd person pronoun and name (“You God!”), (b) and the title (“our God and the God of our Fathers . . . and the God of Jacob”). Since the purpose of the Prayer is not to offer thanks, the title “King of the Universe” is omitted. Hence the fundamental distinction between prayers and benedictions. R. Eleazar of Worms (ca. 1165-1230), explained this fundamental difference as follows:

However, it is required to mention [God’s Kingdom] in the other benedictions, because all blessings—with the exception of prayers—are expressions of thanks. We must bless [i.e., thank] Him for the benefits as well as for the commandments that He had given us . . .

All blessings that are offered as thanks to God must include God’s name and His Kingdom, except for the Prayer since it is not offered as thanks for some benefits or commandment, but is a supplication for men’s needs—and as one must arrange God’s praise before praying—it was not instituted to include [God’s] Kingdom.⁵⁸

The second part is a doxology addressed to God in the 2nd person. It consists of: (a) a vocative (“O God!”), (b) the titles (“Great! Mighty! and Awesome!”),⁵⁹ (c) a

56 *Sefer Ha-ʿIqqarim*, 2:161, II, 26.

57 *The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. Krisopp Lake (Loeb Classical Library), I:175.

58 *Sefer ha-Roqeah* (Cremona, 5317/1557), 67c-d, #363.

59 The *He* prefixed to these adjectives, as well as to *hā-ʿĒl* is the sign of the vocative, what medieval grammarians called *Hē haqqēriʿā*; see Dunash ben Labraṭ, *Sēfer Teshubot . . . ʿal R. Seʿadya Gaʿon*, ed. Robert Schroter (Breslau, 1866), 39-40, 59; and David Qimḥi, *Hebrew Grammar (Mikhlol)*, ed. and trans. William Chomsky (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1952), 356 and the valuable note of the ed., 370.

laudation praising God's magnificence and benevolence ("Highest God . . . O Holy!"). The third part is (a) a list of supplications ("middle benedictions"), (b) and invocations (the concluding three benedictions). On the Sabbath and Holidays the middle benedictions are replaced by an invocation concerning the day at hand. This part is addressed to God in the 2nd person.

The proper understanding of the delocutive may help us gain a better insight into the character of the Hebrew liturgy. The *šebah* "praise" that men offer God is purely subjective: it tends to manifest the worshiper's feelings and devotion—not God's inner qualities. This point has been succinctly and forcefully expressed in a Rabbinic passage cited in a Yemenite manuscript.⁶⁰ It says in the name of Rabban Gamliel:

Although the creatures have no right to express the truth [*ʔāmūtātō*] about God, they have the right to express His praise [*šēbahō*].⁶¹

This principle is consistent with the belief in the unknowability of God, formulated by Philo.⁶² Similarly, the Rabbis taught that God "is above every praise by which He is praised."⁶³ This is why, "if a person would want to say the praise of God in overmeasure"—i.e., more than the standard doxology—"he will be consumed out of this world."⁶⁴ In the *Qaddiš*, too, after announcing that God's name will be proclaimed "Great!" and "Holy!" it is declared that He is "above every benediction, song, praise and consolation that may be expressed in this world." This idea is at the core of the liturgical hymn *Nišmat* recited on the Sabbath and Holidays before *Yištabbah Šimkhā* ("Let us praise your name"). It consists of three parts. The theme of the last part—leading to the hymn *Yištabbah Šimkhā*—is the wondrous care and special providence that God exhibits toward Israel. The theme of the first part is that God is laudable by every one of His creatures: "Every living soul shall bless your name!"⁶⁵ The second theme is the categoric impossibility of actually expressing the true magnificence of God. It begins with the confession, "If our mouths were filled with song like the sea . . . We would not be able to thank you . . . and to bless your name, our King! for one of the countless and infinite times which you have bestowed on us and our fathers of old, miracles and

Significantly, Seʿadya translated the *hē* of *haqqāhāl* (Num. 15:15) as a vocative; see *Version arabe du Pentateuch*, 216, and cf. Ibn Ezra ad loc. Since many modern grammarians have failed to recognize this vocative sign, they could not understand the specific function of such a *He*. A case in point is *ha-Qādōš Bārūkh Hū*—the most common designation of God in Rabbinic Literature. The *Hē* is the sign of the vocative, and should be translated "O Holy! Blessed be He!" (cf. Isa. 6:3). Some confused this *Hē* with the article and then proceeded to substitute the adjective *qādōš* with the noun *qōdeš*. Similarly, the *hē* of *Hammelekh* in *Hammelekh Hammishpāt*, recited in the *ʔĀmidā* during the days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is a vocative that should be translated "O King of Justice!"

60 Concerning the importance and date of this manuscript, see Saul Lieberman, *Yemenite Midrashim* (Jerusalem: Bamberger & Wahrman, 1940), 12 [Hebrew].

61 *Tehillat Pirush Shir ha-Shirim*, ed. M. Friedlander, in *Festschrift . . . Moritz Steinschneider* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1896), Hebrew Section, 58.

62 See Harry Wolfson, *Philo* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948), 2:94–164.

63 *Midrash Tehillim*, ed. Solomon Buber (New York: OM Publishing Co., 1947), p. 164, XIX, 2.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 163; cf. PT *Berakhot*, IX, 1, 11d.

65 Cf. *Midrash Tehillim*, p. 163, XIX, 1.

wonders.” Only after concluding with this confession is the theme of *šebaḥ* “praise” introduced. The same idea is clearly stated in the Scriptures. “Great is the Lord and very much extolled,” said the psalmist, “But His greatness is unfathomable” (Ps. 145:3).

The distinction *šebāḥō/ʾāmūtāō* as well as the delocutive sense of many liturgical terms was lost in an alien linguistic environment. Thus speculative theology (both philosophical and mystical) rose to displace devotional theology. Words, which in their original linguistic environment served to express the subjective pathos of the worshiper, were thought to be objective descriptions of the Deity. In their new context, these words appeared to contradict the simple, absolute doctrine of biblical monotheism. From now on, it became the task of theologians and philosophers to reconcile these contradictions, first among Hellenistic Jews, then among the Church Fathers, and from them to Moslem theologians and medieval Jewish thinkers and mystics.